A SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDE

STREET SKATING 101

Curbs, manual pads, ledges and how to read a spot

A SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDE

STREET

READ IT ON YOUR PHONE



TAPE 05 / STREET

00 STREET SKATING 101

BEFORE WE START

Street skating is skating the world as it is. Curbs, benches, ledges, gaps, banks, manual pads, handrails. None of it was built for skateboarding, which is exactly what makes it fun.

This book picks up where *Your First Tricks* leaves off. You should be comfortable rolling, pushing, turning and doing an ollie on flat ground. If you're still working on your ollie, go back and get that solid first. Almost everything in street skating starts there.

What's inside:

- Reading a spot: what makes something skateable
- Curbs: your first street obstacle
- Manuals and manual pads
- Ledges: boardslides, 50-50s and 5-0s
- Small gaps and drops
- Banks
- Lines: putting tricks together
- Street etiquette and staying safe
- A progression plan

A quick word on safety: street spots don't come with smooth concrete and soft transitions. Wear shoes you can skate in, think about a helmet, and start small. Every trick in this book is easier and safer on something low.

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READING A SPOT

Before you skate anything, look at it. Good street skaters spend a lot of time just looking.

The ground

- [ ] **Smooth?** Rough ground and cracks stop your wheels. Look at the run-up and the landing.
- [ ] **Debris?** Pebbles are the classic slam. Kick them away before you try anything.
- [ ] **Wet?** Skip it. Wet ground is slippery, and it ruins bearings.

The run-up

Can you get enough speed? Is there a clear, straight line toward the obstacle? Is there anything in the way?

The obstacle

- [ ] **Height:** start low. Shin height or lower for your first ledges.
- [ ] **Edge:** a smooth, hard edge slides and grinds. Rough or crumbly edges catch.
- [ ] **Length:** longer ledges give you more time.

The landing

Is there room to roll away? Is the landing smooth? Where will you end up if you don't land it? If the answer is "in the road," pick another spot.

Wax

Many ledges and curbs need wax to slide well. Rub a little skate wax (or a candle in a pinch) along the edge. Not too much, or you'll slide right off. Always clean up after yourself.

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CURBS: YOUR FIRST STREET OBSTACLE

Curbs are everywhere, they're low, and they're perfect for learning.

Ollie up a curb

01 Roll toward the curb at a medium speed, straight on.

02 Ollie just before your front wheels reach it.

03 Pull your knees up so both trucks clear the edge.

04 Land with both feet over the bolts on top.

Tip: pop a little earlier than you think. Most people pop too late and slam their front wheels into the curb.

Ollie down a curb

Rolling off a curb is easy. Ollie off it to practice landing from a little height. Bend your knees to absorb it.

Curb grinds

Once you're comfortable ollieing onto a curb, try riding along it:

- **50-50:** both trucks on the edge. Ollie up, lock both trucks on, ride, and turn off at the end.
- **5-0:** only the back truck on the edge, nose up. Like a manual on the curb.

- [ ] **Boardslide:** your board's middle on the edge, sliding sideways. Covered more in chapter 4.

A waxed curb makes all of these way easier.

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MANUALS AND MANUAL PADS

A **manual** is balancing on your back wheels while you roll, like a wheelie. A **nose manual** is the same thing on the front wheels.

Learn it on flat first

01 Roll at a slow, steady speed.

02 Move your back foot to the tail, front foot just behind the front bolts.

03 Gently press the tail until the front wheels lift.

04 Balance with your arms and small ankle movements.

05 Try to hold it a little longer each time.

Tip: look ahead, not down. And find the balance point. Too far back and the tail scrapes. Not far enough and the nose drops.

Manual pads

A manual pad is a low, flat box. You ollie onto it, manual across, and roll off the end.

01 Get your manual solid on flat ground first.

02 Ollie onto the pad, landing straight into a manual.

03 Hold it across.

04 Drop the nose and roll off, or ollie off the end.

Start with just ollieing onto the pad and rolling off. Add the manual once that's easy.

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LEDGES

Ledges are the heart of a lot of street skating. Start low and smooth.

Approach

Most ledge tricks need you to roll alongside the ledge at a slight angle, not straight at it. Find an angle that feels natural, maybe a bit less than 45 degrees. Your speed should be comfortable, not fast.

50-50

01 Approach at a slight angle.

02 Ollie up and land both trucks on the edge.

03 Keep your weight centered over the board.

04 Ride it out.

05 At the end, turn your shoulders slightly and roll off, or ollie off.

5-0

Like a 50-50, but only the back truck touches. Your weight is back, the nose stays up. It's a manual on the ledge.

Frontside boardslide

01 Approach with the ledge in front of you (you'll be facing it).

02 Ollie and turn your board 90 degrees so the middle of the deck lands on the edge.

03 Keep your weight centered and your shoulders mostly in line with the ledge.

04 Slide.

05 Turn your board back the way it came and land rolling forward.

Backside boardslide

Same idea, but you approach with your back to the ledge. Many people find it scarier at first because you can't see as well. Start on something very low.

The key to all ledge tricks

Commit to the lock. Most ledge slams happen when you half-commit and your board catches. Pop, lock in, and ride.

SMALL GAPS AND DROPS

A **gap** is a space you ollie over. A **drop** is going off something higher than where you land.

Start tiny

Your first gap can literally be a crack in the ground, or two lines of chalk on flat. Practice ollieing over it while rolling. Then go a little longer.

Rolling off a drop

01 Roll toward the edge at a medium speed.

02 As your front wheels reach the edge, lift your front foot slightly so the board stays level.

03 Land with both feet over the bolts, knees bent.

Ollieing off a drop

Same thing, but ollie right at the edge. You'll go a little farther and land more level. Bend your knees a lot on the landing.

Speed is your friend, to a point

Too slow and your back wheels might clip the edge. Too fast and you'll go flying. Medium speed, steady.

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BANKS

A **bank** is a flat slope, like an angled wall or ramp in the street. Banks are fun and a good bridge to transition skating.

Riding up and down

01 Roll toward the bank straight on.

02 Lean slightly forward as you go up.

03 At the top, turn around (a kickturn) or just roll back down fakie.

Simple bank tricks

- **Kickturns:** ride up, kickturn at the top, ride down.
- **Ollies on the bank:** ollie as you go up, land back on the bank.
- **Bank to flat:** roll down the bank onto flat ground, practicing speed control.

Banks feel different from ramps because there's no curve. The angle is the same the whole way, so you have to commit to it.

LINES: PUTTING IT TOGETHER

A **line** is a set of tricks done one after another without stopping. Lines are what most people picture when they think of street skating.

Start with two

Pick two things you can do: an ollie up a curb, then a manual. Do them back to back. That's a line.

Add one at a time

Once two is easy, add a third. Curb ollie, manual, ollie off a small drop. Keep each trick simple. A clean line of easy tricks looks way better than one hard trick and two bails.

Plan your speed

Lines need you to keep your speed up between tricks. Think about where you'll push, where you'll coast, and where you'll need to slow down.

Film it

Lines look great on video. See *Film and Edit With Your Phone* for how to get a good follow shot.

STREET ETIQUETTE AND STAYING SAFE

Skating the street means sharing it. Being a good neighbor keeps spots alive.

Watch for people and cars

People walking, people working, cars backing out of spaces. They come first. Stop, wait and go again when it's clear.

If you're asked to leave, leave

Security, a business owner, someone who lives there. Arguing almost never helps, and it can get a spot capped (when owners add metal knobs to stop skating). Just go and come back another time, or find another spot.

Clean up

Wax residue, trash, broken bits of board. Leave the spot better than you found it.

Don't damage things

Wax is fine. Breaking stuff isn't. A spot that gets damaged usually gets blocked.

Skate with someone when you can

Having a friend around means someone can help if you slam, watch for cars and film your tricks. It's also just more fun.

Know your limits

Street spots don't have soft landings. Start low, build up, and don't let anyone pressure you into trying something you're not ready for.

A PROGRESSION PLAN

Here's a rough order to work through. Take your time. There's no deadline.

01 **Ollie on flat, rolling, every time.**

02 **Ollie up and down a curb.**

03 **Manual on flat.**

04 **Ollie onto a manual pad and roll off.**

05 **Curb 50-50.**

06 **Small ledge 50-50.**

07 **Manual across a manual pad.**

08 **Frontside boardslide on a low ledge.**

09 **Small gap ollie.**

10 **Ollie off a small drop.**

11 **Bank kickturns.**

12 **A two-trick line, then a three-trick line.**

Skip around if you like. The order is a suggestion, not a rule.

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CHEAT SHEET

- [ ] **Read the spot:** ground, run-up, obstacle, landing. Kick away pebbles.
- [ ] **Wax** ledges and curbs lightly. Clean up after.
- [ ] **Curbs** are the best first obstacle.
- [ ] **Manuals:** find the balance point, look ahead.
- [ ] **Ledges:** slight angle, commit to the lock.
- [ ] **Gaps and drops:** start tiny, medium speed, bend your knees.
- [ ] **Banks:** commit to the angle.
- [ ] **Lines:** start with two easy tricks, add one at a time.
- [ ] **Etiquette:** people first, leave when asked, clean up, don't damage.

TAKE IT TO THE STREET, THEN SEND IT TO A FRIEND

Got a new trick locked on flat? Set it in a game of SKATE. Play with a friend across town or across the world, by video.

Join the testers at **skatelabs.app/testers**. Global SKATE is a free Game of SKATE played by video, in testing on iPhone and Android, for skaters 18+.